

ROGERS LAKE PETITION, AMENDED JANUARY 2008

Submit Petition To:	Department Use Only:	Titles & Contracts	Rolodex # _____
	Recommendation/Initials	Date	Arizona State Land Department
		Public Records	
		1616 W. Adams	
		Phoenix, AZ	85007
Bond Required:	\$1,000	Exam:	_____
Exam #:	_____		
Int Title:	_____		
App Entry:	_____	Approve	_____
Deny	_____		
Reject	_____		
Withdrawn	_____		
* Additional bonding amounts may be assessed by the State Land Commissioner pursuant to A.R.S. § 37-312(D) and R12-5-2503 depending on the size and complexity of the proposed reclassification project.			

**PETITION TO NOMINATE TRUST LAND AS SUITABLE  
FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES**

PETITION NO.                      35-107383                      *Amended January 2008*

**PETITIONER:**

Board of Supervisors of Coconino County, Arizona  
c/o Coconino County Parks and Recreation Department (CCPR)  
Fort Tuthill, HCR 39 Box 3A  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

**Contacts:**

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**I. LEGAL DESCRIPTION**  
**(refer to USGS Bellemont AZ Quad, reproduced in part on the next page)**

TWN	RNG	SEC	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	ACRES	COUNTY	SLD USE CITY	ONLY GRT	PARCEL
CORE PROJECT								
T20N	R6E	5	E2 + S2SW4 + NW4	560	Coconino			
T20N	R6E	6	NE4	160	Coconino			
T21N	R6E	31	E2	320	Coconino			
T21N	R6E	32	SW + SWNWNESE + SWNESE + S2SENESE + W2SE + SESE	297.5	Coconino			
BUFFER LANDS IF FUNDING PERMITS								
T20N	R6E	4	ALL	640	Coconino			
T21N	R6E	31	N2N2	160	Coconino			
T21N	R6E	32	N2N2	160	Coconino			

**Summary of Nominated Lands**

The nominated lands are approximately ten miles southwest of the City of Flagstaff. They are accessible by Interstate 40, Highway 89a, or Woody Mountain Road. Surrounding land is managed by the U.S. Forest Service; Camp Navajo – an Army facility; and The Arboretum at Flagstaff. Significant natural landmarks within or adjacent to the nominated lands include Rogers Lake, and Woody Mountain. These lands are important to the watershed integrity of Rogers Lake and Sinclair Wash. Elevations of the nominated lands range from 7250' to 7650'.

**Core Project**

- Section 5: Nearly 3/4 of the section is the Rogers Lake playa; bisected by Woody Mountain Road (Forest Road 231); features a drainage from Woody Ridge to Rogers Lake.
- Section 6: (R6E) Western portion of Rogers Lake.
- Section 31: Eastern 3/4 of the section is the Rogers Lake playa.
- Section 32: Southern half of the section is the Rogers Lake playa.

**Buffer Lands If Funding Permits**

- Section 4: Southeast of Rogers Lake, bisected by a drainage from Woody Ridge into Rogers Lake.
- Section 31: Northwest portion of Rogers Lake; Camp Navajo is adjacent to the north.
- Section 32: Northeast portion of Rogers Lake; Camp Navajo is adjacent to the north.

See Appendix A: Aerials and photographs of the Rogers Lake area.

(insert map)

## **II. PROPOSED CONSERVATION USES**

The proposed uses of the land are: (a) protection of wildlife habitat; (b) preservation of rare native plant communities; (c) environmental education; (d) scientific research; and (e) protection of public access for passive recreation such as wildlife viewing and non-motorized use of trails. Following are the specific conservation benefits using the criteria identified in Rule R12-5-2502.

## **III. CONSERVATION BENEFITS**

### **1. Open Space**

Thousands of acres at Rogers Lake are unimproved and remain free of the visible obstructions that often accompany an agricultural or urban footprint. In fact, this landscape has been used by humans for 5000 years and yet is as strikingly open and spacious as it was in the past (see Appendix A photographs).

### **2. Unique Scenic Beauty**

Scenic values of the nominated lands include views of the Rogers Lake playa, the San Francisco Peaks and Woody Mountain; the appearance of migratory and aquatic birds; impressive gatherings of large game such as elk, deer and antelope; grassy meadows of varying sizes; and mixed stands of ponderosa pine, aspen, and oak. It is a spectacular location for sightseeing, photography, bird and wildlife watching, and hiking for residents and visitors alike.

### **3. Wildlife and Vegetation**

#### **Vegetation**

The nominated Trust lands include a wide range of vegetation types, including grasslands, mountain meadows, ponderosa pine forests, mixed forests, marshy meadows, and wetlands. More than 10 native plant community types have been described for this general area, with more than 450 plant species identified. Almost all are native plant species, with only 2% of the plants identified from the area being nonnative, due in part to the undisturbed nature of these lands.

Ponderosa pine forest is characteristic of the region. Interspersed in the pine forest are Gambel oak, alligator juniper, Colorado blue spruce (on north-facing slopes), and Douglas fir. Stands of white fir represent relic populations that have persisted for thousands of years.

Floristic checklists from adjacent properties indicate that plant diversity is high. The Arboretum at Flagstaff recorded nearly 200 species of plants and 405 species are documented at Camp Navajo. These surveys are an excellent indicator of the number and types of species that may be found throughout the nominated State Trust Lands. According to Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), "Rogers Lake provides the only consistent marsh/wet meadow habitat west of Interstate 17 and south of Interstate 40 within the confines of the Coconino National Forest ... Spikerush dominates the wetland, while hardstem bulrush and cattails border small pot-holes."

AGFD's Heritage Data Management System shows that the following special status species have been documented as occurring in the Rogers Lake area: Arizona cinquefoil, Arizona leather

flower, and Mogollon columbine. More than 15 plant species, listed under the Arizona Native Plant Law, and one USFS 'sensitive' species were found at the adjacent Camp Navajo.

#### Wildlife

More than 350 animal or wildlife species have been found to occur in these habitats. The Rogers Lake basin, when watered, attracts waterfowl and shorebirds. An April 20, 2006 aerial survey conducted by AGFD counted over 500 ducks of eight species in addition to American coot and American avocet. Elk, pronghorn antelope, and the Gunnison's prairie dogs use the dry meadows around Rogers Lake as well as the meadows scattered throughout the nominated Trust lands.

Fourteen wildlife species classified as endangered, threatened, or species of concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been found at the adjacent Camp Navajo. These include the Mexican vole, the occult little brown bat, the Arizona toad, and the northern goshawk. Bald eagle nesting sites were documented around Rogers Lake by Coconino National Forest.

The Mexican spotted owl, listed as a threatened species by USFWS occurs throughout these nominated lands. The Coconino National Forest and Camp Navajo have implemented specific management guidelines to protect this species and its habitat.

See Appendix C:

Vegetation Diversity Map  
Bird Species Seen in the Flagstaff Area Christmas Bird Counts  
The Arboretum at Flagstaff Bird List  
Camp Navajo - Vegetation Communities and Significant Species  
Camp Navajo - Threatened and Endangered Species and Species of Concern  
Distribution Maps of: Mexican Spotted Owl, Mountain Lion, Mule Deer, and Rocky Mountain Elk.

#### 4. Cultural Resources

These lands are rich in prehistoric and historic sites. Peter Pilles, archeologist for the Coconino National Forest, describes these lands as high in lithic scatters. The scatter material is predominantly obsidian and centers around Government Mountain (near Garland Prairie) to the west, which was one of the most important prehistoric obsidian sources in the Southwestern United States. Sites and scatter areas date back to the pre-agricultural Archaic period (possibly more than 5,000 years ago). According to the Forest Service, densities of sites in the area average between 1 to 9 sites per square mile, with densities reaching up to 29 sites per square mile in some areas. Scatter sites are particularly abundant in the vicinity of Rogers Lake.

According to the Arizona State Museum, the edge of Rogers Lake has a moderate prehistoric and historic site density based on a 50 percent sample survey of several sections. A full coverage archaeological survey of the lake's edge would likely reveal a higher site density. Recorded sites include prehistoric stone tool scatters related to hunting activities.

The historic sites are largely attributable to sheep herding and logging. Historic period trash scatters and decaying log structures are common types of recorded sites. Between 1915 and 1930, Basque shepherders developed camps around Rogers Lake. The Manterola Sheep Company continues to ranch the area (see list of grazing leases).

Logging was the leading industry in early Flagstaff and influenced the development of the region. The Arizona Lumber and Timber Company constructed railroads to transport lumber to city lumber mills. Two of these railroad lines crossed the nominated State Trust Land and are visible today. The Rogers Lake South line, circa 1902, crossed Section 4 (with two spur lines), and Section 5. The Rogers Lake North line, circa 1920, crossed Sections 32 and 31.

According to Pat Stein, there has been little research done on the railroad lines located on State Trust Land. Stein recommends that further research be done in order to interpret these historic resources for the public. One interpretative technique would be to convert some of the railroad beds into trails (see Section 6g). Designating these lands for conservation use would preserve the historic sites, allow for further research, and create opportunities for interpretive education.

See Appendix D:

Excerpts from Logging Railroads of the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests (pages 22-23, 25, 27-28, 88-90, 98). Pat Stein, 1993.

Map: *Rogers Lake South Line*, Logging Railroads of the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests.

Map: *Rogers Lake North Line*, Logging Railroads of the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests.

Map: *Woody Ridge Line*, Logging Railroads of the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests.

Overview of Archaeological Resources. Correspondence from John Madsen, Arizona State Museum, 2000.

## 5. Wildlife Habitat

The undisturbed nature of the nominated lands combines with surrounding protected areas to make a large, contiguous area of excellent-quality habitat that supports a diverse biology. The selected lands abut Camp Navajo to the north and Coconino National Forest to the east, south and west. The Arboretum at Flagstaff is a short distance away. Taken as a whole, the area provides significant habitat and movement corridors for species of conservation concern.

Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) considers Rogers Lake to be premiere wildlife habitat. It is an extremely important ephemeral wetland for waterfowl and shore birds, and an uncommon habitat in Arizona. In seasons when the lake is dry, the lake bed becomes an important foraging site for elk and mule deer. AGFD describes Rogers Lake as the

*“only consistent marsh/wet meadow habitat west of Interstate 17 and south of Interstate 40 within the confines of the Coconino National Forest ... Waterfowl and shorebirds prominently use open water habitat at Rogers Lake when precipitation events favor the marsh. When marsh habitat coincides with spring or fall migrations, the diversity and abundance of waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds is impressive ... Elk, pronghorn, and Gunnison’s prairie dogs use the dry meadow fringe around the lake bed. Summer drought conditions tend to concentrate elk herds, which are attracted to forage on spikerush in the wet meadow. During late summer in dry years, it is not unusual to observe 600 elk in the lake basin. A prairie dog colony occupies a town in the dry meadow fringe, mostly on private land northwest of the lake bed. Pronghorn also utilize the dry meadow fringe of Rogers Lake as summer seasonal range.”*

The second critical habitat feature is Woody Ridge and its associated smaller ridges in Section 4. This system forms an important north – south movement route for turkey, elk, mule deer, black bear, and mountain lions. The varied terrain supports significant biotic diversity and the ridges are important feeding sites, especially where there is abundant oak. Oak stands are especially important to turkey, mule deer, bandtail pigeon, acorn woodpeckers, black headed grosbeak, house wrens, red faced warblers and western wood peewee, and other cavity nesting birds such as nuthatches and chickadees.

Wildlife movement corridors through this unfragmented landscape are important to the survival of large animals, in particular. Wildlife movement corridors traverse the nominated lands, and are identified on the wildlife habitat map from the *Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan*. The Plan judges the nominated lands to be key habitat, with portions of Section 4 and 5 being listed as high quality habitat (as opposed to common habitat).

See Appendix C:

Map: *Wildlife Habitat, Rogers Lake Area*

Map: *Wildlife Habitat Map, Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan*.

Correspondence from Arizona Game and Fish Department, Region II, Flagstaff

## **6. Other:**

### **6a. Geologic and Topographic Features**

The nominated lands provide visual and physical access to some of the region's unique geologic features that include faults, lava flows, remnant volcanic material, and unique basalt and sandstone formations. Rogers Lake itself is one of the largest dry alluvial lakes in the region. The ridge crossing sections 31 and 32 along the north side of Rogers Lake is a small normal fault known as the Dunnam fault. It exposes the soft sandstones of the Moenkopi formation that lies beneath the volcanic surface of the region. The integrity—absence of land development and fragmentation— of the primary topographic features (Rogers Lake, Woody Mountain, and Woody Ridge) contributes significantly to the scenic values, diversity of wildlife and vegetation, and watershed health of the nominated lands.

### **6b. Watershed Integrity**

The nominated lands (Sections 4, 5, 6, 31, and 32) all contain slopes that drain into Rogers Lake either directly or via intermittent streams. Rogers Lake, its tributaries, and Sinclair Wash downstream are significant groundwater recharge locations. Ten of 21 wells operated by City of Flagstaff are located at its Woody Mountain well field in Sections 35 and 2. The Woody Mountain well field has been in production since 1954 and has a capacity of 5.6 million gallons per day. The well field has experienced a decline in water level over the last 42 years. Groundwater is an important source of water for Flagstaff. Protection of the surrounding watershed in its natural state is critically important to maintaining the quantity and quality of Flagstaff's drinking water.

See Appendix E:

Map: *Regional Utilities Plan - Water, Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan.*

Map: City of Flagstaff Woody Mountain Wellfield.

#### **6c. Floodplain Management**

Rogers Lake is the lowest elevation of the nominated lands, and fills with water during periods of significant flooding. Sections 5, 6, 31, 32 and the northwest corner of Section 4 are all within the 100-year floodplain.

See Appendix E:

Map: *Flood Insurance Rate Map*, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

#### **6d. Surface Water and Groundwater**

Rogers Lake collects surface water that feeds Sinclair Wash, the main tributary of the Rio de Flag. In addition, surface water is collected by two constructed watering holes, Home Tank in Section 32 and Lake Tank in Section 5. These contribute to groundwater recharge in addition to providing water for wildlife and cattle.

Surface water hydrology, quality and recharge are closely tied to regional geology. The volcanic terrain permits surface waters to easily infiltrate this rock, reducing flood hazards and providing groundwater recharge. The Oak Creek and Dunnam faults are also key groundwater recharge areas. Development of the region would have negative effects on the surface water and groundwater recharge cycle that is important to the City's Woody Mountain wellfield.

See Appendix E:

Map: *Springs and Ephemeral Drainages*

#### **6e. Long-term Viability of the Land for Conservation Management**

The long-term efficacy of managing the nominated lands for conservation depends in large part on future land use in the surrounding landscape. In fact, Coconino National Forest, Camp Navajo, and The Arboretum at Flagstaff own most of the surrounding land and manage it for complementary objectives.

In addition, Northern Arizona University leases the nominated lands as part of its Centennial Forest. According to the inter-governmental agreement between NAU and the State Land Department, Centennial Forest management will address: "(1) forest ecosystem health; (2) maintenance of the natural assets and values of the state-held educational trust lands; (3) reduction of the risk of wildfire; (4) and long-term ecological research, the results of which may be applied to lands throughout Arizona." These management objectives would continue if the nominated lands were designated for conservation.

See Appendix F:

Letter from the Director of the Centennial Forest.  
Map of the Centennial Forest  
Map of land being excluded from the API petition.  
Centennial Forest Intergovernmental Agreement

#### **6f. Local, Regional, or Other Planning Considerations**

Three planning documents reflect the local desire to see the nominated lands preserved as open space dedicated to conservation uses. The plan guidance is to limit development and continue low impact uses while adding compatible educational, research, and recreation opportunities.

Coconino County Comprehensive Plan

Approved by the County Board of Supervisors in 2003, the following goals and their associated policies support this API proposal:

Goal: *Conserve and enhance the natural qualities of environmentally sensitive lands.*

- “The County encourages the protection and restoration of floodplains, springs, riparian areas and the natural conditions of these and other environmentally sensitive lands as opportunities arise and resources become available.”
- “In order to protect riparian vegetation and wetlands, every effort shall be made to avoid development in floodplains, locate structures on portions of property outside of floodplains, and to utilize floodplain areas for open space, recreation, community amenity sites, or other uses that do not impede the natural functions and processes of flooding.”
- “The County promotes the use of conservation tools such as conservation easements, fee-simple acquisition, or cluster development to protect riparian areas, wetlands, and other critical habitats.” (p. 25)

Goal: *Protect wildlife communities and their habitat.*

- “In order to improve watershed conditions, reduce soil loss or damage, protect aquatic habitat, and minimize unnecessary disturbance to wildlife, the County supports the protection of habitat and the closure of unnecessary roads.”
- “The County favors projects that protect open space and connective corridors and supports the protection of wildlife watering areas.” (p. 26)
- “The County seeks to protect and preserve old-growth habitat and ecosystems.” (p. 29)

Goal: *Provide for the stewardship of important natural areas.*

- “The County promotes the protection of important natural resources through collaboration in acquiring, managing, and interpreting natural areas.”
- “The County supports access to open spaces for all residents where suitable.” (p. 65)

2001 Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan

The *Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan* was adopted by the Coconino County Board of Supervisors as an amendment to the *Coconino County Comprehensive Plan*. All nominated lands are located outside of the City of Flagstaff Urban Growth Boundary. The Land Use Plan zones these lands as *Public Multiple Use* with a “high priority for retention, and thus should not be developed for urban uses ... these lands can serve as buffers, quiet areas, wildlife habitat or scenic areas (p. 30).” The 2001 Plan cites a number of regional policies that support this petition:

Encourage development within the urban growth boundary.  
Restrict development at the periphery of the planning area.  
Preserve priority open lands.  
Preserve rural character and natural environment.  
Preserve the character of the region’s natural setting.  
Protect the region’s topographic features.  
Continue inter-agency coordination for the protection of wildlife habitat and corridors.

Conserve water and protect resources.  
Protect wildlife habitat and corridors.  
Protect archeological and cultural resources.

#### 1998 Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan

All the nominated lands are identified as *High Priority for Retention*. The criteria used in prioritizing the 1998 Plan's recommendations are "values and features related to riparian/wetlands, topography, wildlife, culture, recreation, and vistas (p. 64)."

See Appendix B:

Map: *Land Retention Priorities Map*, Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan

Map: *Regional Land Use Plan*, Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan

Map: *Growth Boundaries*, Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan

### 6g. Recreation

Recreational trail use would be highly compatible with both the conservation purpose of this API petition and with another proposed use, environmental education. Designated trails would provide the public with access to Rogers Lake and nearby destinations. Careful design and signage would protect natural and cultural resources by guiding visitors along paths that minimally impact sensitive resources.

Recreational trails would be designed to provide public opportunities to view and learn about wildlife. This may involve interpretive kiosks and blinds for viewing wildlife. Arizona Game and Fish Department and Coconino County are currently developing a project called *Watchable Wildlife* to promote the educational and economic benefits to the Flagstaff community of appropriate access to locally important wildlife habitats.

The historic railroad lines found in Sections 4, 5, 31, 32 could also be converted to recreational trails. Fort Tuthill County Park and the City of Flagstaff have converted railroad beds to trails. In fact, old railroad rights of way could form the backbone of an interconnected trail system to make the area highly accessible to Flagstaff residents and tourists. These proposed trails would offer unique opportunities to interpret the history of logging as well as the natural and cultural resources along the route. Both the *Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan* and the *Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan* propose extending the Flagstaff Urban Trail System to Rogers Lake and The Arboretum at Flagstaff.

See Appendix G:

Map: *Rural Open Spaces and Trails Plan*, Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan.

Map: *Community Linkage System*, Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan.

### 6h. Accessibility

The nominated lands are all accessible by graded and unimproved Forest Service roads. Development of recreational trails in cooperation with the Forest Service and the City of Flagstaff would create an alternate access for the public. Creating access to these parcels for bicyclists and hikers will produce little negative impact on the landscape and provide the Flagstaff community with significant new access to unique natural and historical resources.

**6i. Scientific Education**

The nominated lands are part of the Centennial Forest administered by Northern Arizona University, as discussed in Section 6e. The Arboretum at Flagstaff, located just northeast of the nominated lands off Woody Mountain Road, has been the site of horticultural and botanical research for several decades. The Centennial Forest and The Arboretum at Flagstaff have the potential to lead scientific education for K-12 programs, graduate education, life-long learning, and applied research on forest and grassland restoration.

Scientific education generates successful information transfer when many local organizations with a mission of education and research partner on collaborated projects. Possible organizations that would have an interest in scientific education on the nominated lands include Northern Arizona University, The Arboretum at Flagstaff, the Museum of Northern Arizona, Willow Bend Environmental Education Center, the Flagstaff Unified School District, Coconino Community College, Cooperative Extension Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and the U.S. Forest Service.

**6j. Types of Multiple Use**

Preservation of the landscape in a natural state is the primary goal of this petition. Complementary uses would be permitted as long as they do not negatively impact the natural and historic values of the properties. Potential activities include wildlife viewing; trails use; education and interpretation for all ages; hunting; grazing; and scientific research. It will be important to coordinate with partners and to educate users to ensure that potentially compatible uses do indeed support the primary goal.

**6k. Preservation of Resource Production**

Preservation of an open landscape often enables existing land use practices that would be discontinued if the nominated parcels were to be developed. Coconino County anticipates that Arizona Game & Fish Department and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service will become project partners. A core activity of both agencies is assistance to landowners in managing resource consumption in the context of land and water stewardship.

While it is too soon to work on management plans for the project, they will surely conform to the policies of partnering agencies. Fishing, hunting, and grazing in upland areas will likely be continued. Grazing in wetland areas will likely be discontinued (see Section IV, *Existing Land Uses*, for detailed information on affected leases). The County has already met with the affected landowner about this anticipated change, and received preliminary support for it. The lessee would be eligible to apply to Arizona State Parks' Growing Smarter Grant Program II, called Conservation-based Agricultural Management Alternatives. The program awards grants to individual landowners or grazing/agricultural lessees of state or federal land who implement alternatives that use production practices or yield reductions to provide wildlife habitat or other public benefits that preserve open space.

**6l. Relationship to other State Trust lands**

Locally, land development interest in State Trust Lands slowed in 2007. In general, land transfers anticipated by the 2002 Arizona State Lands Flagstaff Concept Plan have been slow to

materialize. Given the broader demographic shifts occurring in the southwest United States, land development activity is expected to resume, but the timing is uncertain.

Using this market lull to permanently protect significant natural assets strengthens local real estate values over the long-term. Numerous studies, including work from University of Arizona, cite the benefits of protected open space as including price premiums, shorter exposure at market, and stable ownership patterns for adjacent lands. At a regional scale, State Trust Lands will benefit as a group from the reclassification of the nominated lands to conservation.

Research: *Riparian Areas Generate Property Value Premium for Landowners*, Bonnie Colby and Steven Wishart, University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, January 2002. Available at [ag.arizona.edu/arec/pubs/pubs.html](http://ag.arizona.edu/arec/pubs/pubs.html)

#### **6m. Pre-existing protections**

Coconino County is not aware of existing regulations that currently require the lessee to protect wildlife habitat and rare native plant communities as is proposed by this petition.

#### **6n. Tourism**

Tourism is the most important economic and employment sector for the City of Flagstaff and most of Northern Arizona. National and international tourists travel through Flagstaff as the gateway to destinations such as the Grand Canyon, the San Francisco Peaks, Lake Powell, Walnut Canyon, Wupatki, and Sunset Crater. While in the area, many of these tourists visit local attractions such as the observatories and the arboretum. Out-of-state tourists and Arizona residents are attracted to this region for its unique scenic beauty, climate, and wildlife.

The Rogers Lake area is already a well-known destination for tourists, campers, bird and wildlife watchers, hunters, and recreationists. Protecting these lands from development will ensure that their contribution to the local economy grows as outdoor-oriented tourism grows.

#### **6o. Benefit to the Trust**

Coconino County believes that reclassification of these lands is in the best interest of the Trust because it would benefit all other State-owned land in the Flagstaff area. Reclassification to conservation would reduce the availability of State land for future development and at the same time, protect significant open space. Each of these directly strengthens the value of remaining State Trust Lands in greater Flagstaff. Land values of the Trust's holdings are indirectly influenced by other market factors including quality of life, local economy, and employment. Research indicates that conservation of iconic assets like Rogers Lake benefits local economies.

### **IV. EXISTING SURFACE USES**

**Existing surface uses by lease number** (information not checked since original 2002 petition):

Special Land Use Permit:	023-093107-05-000, Manterola Sheep Co.
Agricultural Leases:	No Agricultural Leases.
Urban Lands Act Plans:	No.
Holding Lease:	Yes.

Section	Grazing Lease	Lease Acres to be Retired	Rights of Way
T20N R6E S4	005-001802-00-000 Manterola Sheep Company	0	014-025090-00-000. APS 071-001998-00-000. APS, 10 year advance rent.
T20N R6E S5	005-000255-00-000 Miller Brothers  005-001802-00-000 Manterola Sheep Company	350   0	014-025090-00-000. APS  018-103422-00-000. Georgia Frontiere  016-072839-61-000. USDA-FS REG. 3
T20N R6E S6	005-000255-00-000 Miller Brothers	100	014-025090-00-000. APS
T21N R6E S31	005-000255-00-000 Miller Brothers	320	
T21N R6E S32	005-000255-00-000 Miller Brothers	298	

## V. LOCAL JURISDICTION

Nominated lands are located within Coconino County that is administered by the Coconino County Board of Supervisors.

## VI. COCONINO COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Please see Section 6f, *Local, Regional, or Other Planning Considerations*, for an extended discussion of controlling local plans, zoning designations, and reference documents.

The Coconino County zoning for all the nominated plans is *Open Space*. The proposed conservation use is consistent with the existing zoning.

## VII. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS

Coconino County is unaware of impacts to the physical aspects of other land owned or controlled by the current lessee, or to the local community, resulting from reclassifying the nominated lands to permanent conservation. Both stakeholders would gain improved physical land condition via:

- Protection of City of Flagstaff public water supply;
- Retention and enhancement of the unique native plant community;
- Permanent protection of significant wildlife habitat and its associated movement corridor;
- Permanent protection of historic and prehistoric cultural resources;
- Opportunities for scientific research to improve land management practices;

- Better management of public access to the Rogers Lake area using a combination of built trails for hikers, bikers and equestrians; outdoor education and historic interpretation programs; and control of unauthorized vehicular access.

Coconino County believes that the economic value of lost wetland grazing is offset by the increased property values on other land the lessee owns adjacent to the project area. In addition, the proposed project enables the lessee/landowner to consider selling the development rights on the abutting ranchland and become a project partner. The County has discussed this possibility with the rancher and with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service that operates programs for ranchland protection. The rancher indicates interest in selling a conservation easement.

There are no known negative impacts to the economic condition of other lands controlled by the lessee or by the community. In fact, there are a number of positive economic outcomes that result from:

- Enhanced real estate values of nearby properties;
- A regionally significant watchable wildlife destination for both locals and tourists;
- Protection of the water quality and quantity of City of Flagstaff well fields;
- Floodwater protection for City of Flagstaff;
- Continuation of existing upland grazing leases and hunting patterns;
- New partnerships to benefit educational and research organizations.

#### **VIII. RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGEMENT**

Coconino County Parks and Recreation would own the land and have primary responsibility for funding and implementing management activities. Management plans and policies will be developed in collaboration with Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and potential project partners such as Coconino National Forest and Northern Arizona University. The County has already discussed drafting intergovernmental agreements regarding the future purchase and management of these lands with NAU Centennial Forest and AGFD. It has also discussed enrolling the nominated lands into the NRCS Wetland Reserve Program. This would allow project lands to receive technical and funding assistance to restore wetland functions that may have become degraded.

#### **IX. MINERAL POTENTIAL**

T21N R6E Section 32: Clay